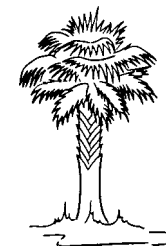


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# Chapter 4

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER EDUCATION



This chapter focuses attention on the question of how best to prepare social studies teachers and provide for their professional development in the field. Because of the nature of social studies as a broad field of study, some differences exist as to the appropriate training that should be required of anyone who is to teach in the field. Clearly, to teach the subject well, one must know the subject well. However, social studies as an integrative field is drawn from a number of academic disciplines. In this document we emphasize four of those: history, political science, geography, and economics. The dilemma, then, is complex. Should one preparing for teaching in social studies do so in the “broad field,” receiving exposure to the wide range of disciplines that inform social studies yet receiving no in-depth training in a specific discipline? Or should one do so with in-depth preparation in a discipline—akin to a college major in that discipline—with enough exposure to the others to enable integration in the classroom?

In part, the answer to this dilemma depends on the grade level—elementary, middle, or high school—at which the subject is being taught. Yet regardless of the level, those teaching social studies must have substantial course work in the field of social studies. The subject is too important to be taught by teachers with little or no background or interest in the field. Furthermore, the higher the school level for which the teacher is preparing, the more the course work should resemble a major in an academic discipline.

Expertise in an academic discipline is necessary but not sufficient for powerful teaching. Preparation for teaching in the social studies must include experiences that familiarize the teacher candidate with the nature of the learner, learning theory, assessment, classroom management, and the appropriate use of technology. Candidates should also have a strong background in the instructional methodologies that allow them to translate their knowledge in the academic discipline(s) into learning experiences for children.

Certification or licensure is only the first step in professional development. Once in the field, social studies teachers must have opportunities to grow as reflective practitioners. Therefore, this chapter presents characteristics of high-quality professional development.

### **The Role of Higher Education**

Institutions of higher education must provide the content of the discipline as well as the appropriate pedagogy.

### **Social Studies Subject Matter**

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Previously, the point is made that the higher the grade level an individual teaches, the more thorough his or her understanding of the subject matter should be. The following guidelines are recommended for the various levels.

**Elementary.** In order to integrate history and the various social sciences adequately as prescribed in this document, the candidates seeking elementary school certification should complete a curriculum that includes United States and world history (including non-Western civilizations), political science, economics, and geography. This course work may be at the introductory level, but it should enable the elementary school teacher to provide learners with the following kinds of experiences drawn from those disciplines. (These descriptors are adapted from the *NCSS National Standards for Social Studies Teachers* [National Council for the Social Studies 1997]).

- From **history**: to provide learners with a sense of their own roots and their connections with others and the past; the skills of historical thinking that will enable them to differentiate past, present, and future time; and the ability to raise questions and to seek answers from historical stories and records from the past as they study the history of their families, communities, states, region, nation, and other nations or topics with worldwide implications.
- From **government/political science**: to provide learners with experiences that give them a sense of their relationship to others and the need for rules for resolving conflicts and disagreements and that give them an introduction to government through the use of analogies with the governance of the family and the school.

- From **geography**: to provide learners with the experiences that give them an understanding of the characteristics and purposes of geographic representation, such as maps, globes, and satellite-produced images; an understanding of their local community and nearby communities; the ability to locate major physical and human features in the United States and on the Earth and show how these physical and human processes together shape places and ways of living; opportunities to understand how people depend upon and modify the physical environment and how the physical environment can both accommodate and be endangered by human activities; an understanding of how places and people's perceptions of places change over time; and an introduction to the spatial dimensions of social and environmental problems.
- From **economics**: to provide learners with experiences that enable them to understand the concepts of resources, economic wants, supply and demand, goods and services, and opportunity costs; experiences that allow them to see that resources are insufficient to provide people with everything they want, that people make choices that determine how resources are used, and that choice means that something is given up.

**Middle.** In order to integrate history and the various social sciences adequately as prescribed in this document, the candidate seeking middle school certification in social studies should complete a curriculum that includes United States and world history (including non-Western civilizations), political science, economics, and geography. The subject matter course work for these individuals should include no less than 30 percent of a total four-year or extended-preparation program, with an area of concentration of at least eighteen semester hours (twenty-four quarter hours) in one academic discipline.

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Such a program of study should enable the middle school–level social studies teacher to provide learners with the following kinds of experiences drawn from those disciplines. (These descriptors are adapted from the *NCSS National Standards for Social Studies Teachers*.)

- From **history**: to provide learners with a more formal study of history than at the elementary school level; opportunities to construct time lines and to group events by broadly defined eras; opportunities to study and interpret primary historical sources, taking into account the context of the historical period from which the sources are drawn; and opportunities to formulate historical questions and to identify the various points of view of individuals who held differing opinions in a dispute.
- From **government/political science**: to provide learners with opportunities to answer questions such as
  - What is civic life?
  - What is politics?
  - What is government?
  - What are the foundations of the American political system?
  - What are the basic values and principles of American democracy?
  - How does the government of the United States, established by the Constitution, embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
  - What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
  - What are the roles of the citizen in American democracy?
- From **geography**: to provide learners with experiences in making and using maps, globes, charts, models, and

databases to analyze spatial distributions and properties; skills to analyze the physical and human characteristics of places and how different human groups alter places in distinct ways; the ability to identify and understand how technology shapes the physical and human characteristics of places; an understanding of how ecosystems work and how physical processes and human activities influence change in ecosystems; an understanding of the impact of spatial variations in population distribution and migration, as well as in the effects of migration on the characteristics of places; an introduction to the processes of cultural diffusion and urbanization and to the fundamental role of energy resources in society; and the ability to apply a geographic point of view to solve social and environmental problems.

- From **economics**: to provide learners with experiences that enable them to comprehend the concept of scarcity and to understand that economic choices involve tradeoffs; that governments and societies experience scarcity as well as individuals; that the choices people make have consequences; and that the evaluation of choices and opportunity costs can be subjective and can in some respects differ among individuals and societies.

**High School.** In order to teach “global studies” (world history and world geography), U.S. history, economics, government, or social science electives at the high school level, the candidate seeking secondary school certification should complete a curriculum in which no less than 40 percent of the course work is in history and the social sciences. At least thirty semester hours (forty quarter hours) should be devoted to one academic area. Such a program of study should enable the high school–level social studies teacher to provide learners with the following kinds of experiences drawn from those disciplines.

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These experiences should require students to do much more than simply recount information. Rather, they should begin to reflect a much more sophisticated understanding of the structure of the discipline that is being addressed. (These descriptors are adapted from the *NCSS National Standards for Social Studies Teachers*.)

- From **history**: to provide learners with opportunities to engage in a sophisticated analysis and reconstruction of the past; draw upon various forms of data in order to elaborate upon information provided by historical sources; consider multiple perspectives in interpreting the past; recognize the role of interpretation in history; make choices regarding historical sources, drawing from bibliographical studies; and utilize historical methodologies in analyzing and defending historical arguments.
- From **government/political science**: to provide learners an opportunity to develop an understanding of civic life, politics, and government so that the learners can explore the origins of governmental authority and recognize the need for government; identify the crucial functions of government, including laws and rules; evaluate rules and laws; differentiate between limited and unlimited government and appreciate the importance of limitations on government power; explore American democracy, including the American idea of constitutional government, the impact of the distinctive characteristics of American society on our government, the nature of the American political culture and the values and principles that are basic to American life and government; understand how the government of the United States operates under the Constitution; understand the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy, including the ideas of distributed, shared, and limited powers of government;

identify how national, state, and local governments are organized; understand the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs; develop an understanding of citizenship, its rights and responsibilities, as well as dispositions to participate effectively in civic life; and become aware of the full range of opportunities to participate as citizens in the American democracy and of their responsibilities for doing so.

- From **geography**: to provide learners an opportunity to use geographic representations and tools to analyze, explain, and solve geographic problems; apply concepts and models of spatial organization to make decisions; develop an understanding of how relationships between humans and the physical environment lead to the formation of places and to a sense of personal and community identity; understand how multiple criteria are used to define a region and to analyze geographic issues; understand the interactions of Earth's physical systems and the spatial consequences of physical processes across Earth's surface; understand the spatial characteristics of cultural convergence and divergence; understand the classification, characteristics, and spatial distribution of economic systems and the increasing economic interdependence of the world's economies; see how differing points of view and self-interest play roles in conflicts over territory and resources; and learn how to use geographic knowledge, skills, and perspectives to analyze problems and make decisions.
- From **economics**: to provide learners with an opportunity to understand the importance of choice in the face of limited resources and the different methods used to allocate goods and services; recognize the interrelationships of such concepts as specialization, voluntary exchange, markets,

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and competition; understand the roles of institutions such as banks, corporations, legal systems, and nonprofit organizations and the belief in and enforcement of property rights; understand the role of money in a market economy; analyze the interrelationships between the various factors of production; and critically examine the economic role of government, including the costs and benefits of that role in both the domestic and the international economy.

### **The Role of College Professors**

While it is important for those seeking licensure to be exposed to the content in the field of social studies, the way they are exposed to that content is also important. It is a truism that one teaches the way one was taught. A dry rendition of facts does an injustice to the vitality and dynamism of academic disciplines. Therefore, it is important that college faculty engage students in discussions and activities that will lead to a more sophisticated understanding of their subject matter. That understanding should include not just the “facts, but the overriding and organizing themes, concepts, and questions of the discipline. It should also demonstrate to students the processes by which new information in a discipline is created and old information challenged. Those learning to be teachers must also learn how to be scholars. Without that background, there is little chance that students in the schools will be challenged by their teachers.

It is the more sophisticated understanding of academic subject matter that helps prepare teachers to develop dynamic and powerful teaching and learning situations. In that regard, it is important that ways be found to foster cooperative work between experts in history and the social science disciplines and the pedagogy. This will require that colleges and universities find incentives for their faculty to work with colleagues in education and the public schools.

### **Pedagogy and the World of the Schools**

Schools, colleges, and departments of education must continue to play a role in the education of preservice teachers. All social studies teacher preparation programs should address the following **pedagogical issues** (adapted from the *NCSS National Standards for Social Studies Teachers*):

1. **Learning and development.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to provide learning opportunities at the appropriate school levels that support learners’ intellectual, social, and personal development. Teachers should be attentive to the backgrounds and interests of their students and utilize this information to enhance instruction.
2. **Differences in learning styles.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to create at the appropriate school levels learning experiences that fit the different approaches to learning of diverse learners.
3. **Critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to use at the appropriate school levels a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical thinking and problem-solving and performance skills.
4. **Active learning and motivation.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to create at the appropriate school levels learning environments that encourage social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

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5. **Inquiry, collaboration and supportive classroom interaction.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to use at the appropriate school levels verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques that foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
  6. **Planning instruction.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to plan instruction for the appropriate school levels based on understanding of the subject matter, the students, the community, and curriculum goals.
  7. **Assessment.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to use formal and informal assessment strategies at the appropriate school levels to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of learners. They should be able to gauge student learning using various assessment formats, including performance assessment, fixed response, open-ended questioning, and portfolio strategies.
  8. **Classroom management.** Learning takes place in environments characterized by civility and mutual respect. Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to learning.
  9. **Reflection and professional growth.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to develop as reflective practitioners and continuous learners.
  10. **Professional leadership.** Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and disposition to

foster cross–subject matter collaboration and other positive relationships with school colleagues and positive associations with parents and others in the larger community to support student learning and well-being.

All social studies programs should contain the following **essential elements** (adapted from *NCSS National Standards for Social Studies Teachers*).

1. **A course or courses on teaching social studies.** The course or courses should deal specifically with the nature of the social studies and with ideas, strategies, and techniques for teaching social studies at the appropriate licensure level.

The course or courses should

- be taught by instructors whose background experience and education are appropriate to social studies;
- be specific to the teaching of social studies and the disciplines from which social studies contents is drawn;
- enable prospective teachers to select, integrate, and translate the content and methods of investigation of history and the social science disciplines for use in social studies instruction; and
- prepare prospective teachers to use a variety of approaches to instruction that are appropriate to the nature of social studies content and goals and to use them in diverse settings and with students who have diverse backgrounds, interests, and abilities.

2. **Clinical school experiences in social studies settings.** Institutions preparing social studies teachers should expect prospective social studies teachers to complete multiple clinical experiences that begin early in a student's professional program and culminate in an integrative

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capstone of a substantial amount of time and that are closely supervised by qualified professionals. Furthermore, these experiences should expose prospective teachers to a variety of teaching settings and diverse groups of students.

3. **Qualified faculty.** Institutions preparing social studies teachers should provide faculty in all components of the program who are recognized as exemplary teachers and as scholars in their areas of specialization. Faculty should include social studies education specialists who are either full-time, tenure-track faculty in social studies education and hold a doctoral degree with a major or emphasis in social studies education, history, or an academic discipline within the social studies field; or who are otherwise comparably qualified for their roles.
4. **Substantial instruction in academic areas within the social studies field.** Institutions preparing social studies teachers should expect prospective social studies teachers to complete subject matter content courses (history/social science) that include U.S. history, world history (including both Western and non-Western civilizations), political science (including U.S. government), economics, geography, and behavioral sciences.
5. **General studies.** Institutions preparing social studies teachers should expect prospective social studies teachers to complete—in addition to professional and major courses—general arts and science courses that reach across several areas of study, including language arts, humanities, foreign languages, mathematics, physical sciences, and technology.

### Professional Development

Licensure is only the beginning of a process of professional development that should continue throughout the career of the teacher. Teachers should be scholars, and the essence of scholarship is continued inquiry and reflection. Teachers should pursue individualized professional development programs that enhance their knowledge of the content they teach as well as their ability to represent that knowledge in ways that are meaningful to students. The ideal suggested here is perhaps best expressed in Lee S. Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge: "the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction" (Shulman 1987, 8).

Such an ideal requires continued study in the academic disciplines as well as reflective practice in the classroom. Reflective practice is how teachers make connections between theory and practice. Teachers must examine the contexts in which they make decisions and the results of those decisions and must build rationales for their decision-making. This can happen only when individual teachers themselves are central to plans for professional development. It rarely happens when professional development consists of the imposition of prescriptive practices "from the top down." Therefore, to produce reflective practitioners, professional development programs should

- encourage teachers individually to take responsibility for planning their own professional development;
- foster a community of social studies professionals based on the concepts of sharing, mentoring and mutual support;
- encourage active participation in professional organizations; and
- foster the maintenance of a current knowledge base in both scholarship and pedagogy.

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Several years ago, the National Foundation for Improvement in Education analyzed what constitutes high-quality professional development. In 1996—after two years of examining good schools and professional development opportunities, interviews with teachers and teacher leaders, as well as work with numerous focus groups, researchers, and reformers—this organization published its recommendations. South Carolina has added two more criteria, which are shown at the end of the following list.

### **What Is High-Quality Professional Development?**

High-quality professional development

- has the goal of improving student learning;
- helps teachers meet the future needs of students who learn in different ways and who come from diverse backgrounds;
- provides adequate time for inquiry, reflection, and mentoring and is an important part of the normal working day of all educators;
- is rigorous, sustained, and adequate to the long-term change of practice;
- is directed toward teachers' intellectual development and leadership;
- fosters a deepening of knowledge of the subject matter, an understanding of the learning process, and an appreciation of student's needs;
- is designed and directed by teachers;
- incorporates the best principles of adult learning and involves shared decisions;
- balances individual priorities with school and district needs;
- makes best use of new technologies;
- is site-based and supports a clear vision for students;
- includes exhibitions (demonstrations) of the skills; and

- includes evaluation procedures that assess long-term professional growth.

### **Recertification**

To support the vision of professional development described here, the following recommendations for recertification should be pursued.

- Teachers certified in social studies should complete at least six semester hours of course work every five years, at least half of which must be in one of the academic areas that supports the social studies. Course work must relate directly to their teaching assignment.
- Teachers holding certification in non-social studies fields but who are teaching social studies at the middle or high school level must pursue full certification in social studies.
- Recertification should be supported by administrative leadership and resources at the local and state levels.
- To guide professional development, certification, or recertification, the teacher and district personnel must collaborate to outline an individualized professional development plan.

### **Systemic Collaboration**

This prescription for social studies teacher education and professional development will require much more collaboration than now exists. We have already noted that much closer collaboration should exist between academic and education faculty in colleges and universities. Colleges and universities must find ways for their academic faculty to work with colleagues in education and the public schools. At the state level, licensure policies must be developed that require academic preparation appropriate to the school level at which teachers will work. One



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cannot effectively serve on interdisciplinary teams at the middle school level, for example, if one does not understand the major organizing themes, concepts, and methods of inquiry in one's academic discipline. These understandings provide the structure that allows integrated instruction.

District systems must develop policies that foster the selection of teachers based on their academic accomplishments and potential for professional growth, not on their qualifications to fill

extracurricular positions. At the school level, teaching assignments must match the academic background of the teacher. At the middle school level, for example, those teaching on the sixth- or seventh-grade level should have had concentrated academic preparation in world geography or world history, those on the eighth-grade level in U.S. history. At the high school level, those who majored or concentrated in those subjects should teach them.

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*Throw thy bold banner to the breeze!  
Front with thy ranks the threatening seas  
Like thine own proud armorial trees,  
Carolina! Carolina!*

—Henry Timrod

